

The opening of Moschion's monologue is lost; the supplement is based on the assumption that he explains to the audience what they need to know to understand the dramatic situation.

MOSCHION. *I'm in a mess, and utterly depressed.*
If you will listen, I will tell you why.
I was adopted as a child by Demeas,
A wealthy bachelor who had no heir.
He's been abroad, in Pontos, with a friend,*
And while he was away I fell in love
With Plangon, daughter of our neighbour; he's
The friend with whom my father's gone abroad.
What's more, I promised I would marry her.
My father won't, I'm sure, agree to this;
He'll want me to accept a wealthier bride.
That's bad enough but things are worse than that;
I hardly like to tell you all the facts.
For why should I upset myself? To tell
The truth is painful; yes, I did do wrong.
I reckon it will hurt me, as I say,
But I may make you understand it more,
If I describe my father's character.
I well remember how he pampered me
Soon after my adoption, when I was
A little child, but I'll not dwell on this;
I was too young to know his kindness then.
*When I was entered on the register,**
Like all the world, I was 'one of the mob',
As people say; and really I've become
More miserable, I swear, because we are
So rich. When I was made choregus, I*
Excelled all men in my munificence;
Horses he used to keep for me and hounds;
I led my tribe with brilliance; and I*
Could give a little help to friends in need.
Through him I was a man indeed. But still,
For this I made a fair return to him;

For I was well behaved. It happened then—
 I'll go through all our troubles with you; yes,
 I've time—he formed a passion for a girl
 Who came from Samos*—she's a courtesan—
 It's only human nature, I suppose.

He kept it dark, ashamed. I got to know,
 Although he did not want me to, and thought,
 Unless he got her under his control,
 That younger rivals would soon trouble him.
 He was ashamed to act, because of me
 Perhaps. *I told him he should take the girl*

[Lacuna of about twenty-three lines, for which we give a supplement of two lines only.]

Into his house and he eventually

Agreed. So now she's living here with us. . . .

[Four lines mutilated, including the mysterious words ‘seeing him bearing’, ‘I added everywhere’, ‘to our neighbour’, ‘smashing the seal’.]

Soon my girl's mother was on friendly terms
 With father's girl from Samos, and usually
 She'd visit them; sometimes they came to us.
 One day I ran back from the farm and found
 Them, as it happened, gathered at our house
 With other women there to celebrate
 Adonis' festival.* As you'd expect,
 The festival involved a lot of fun,
 As I was there, I thought I'd stay and watch.
 Their rowdiness made sleep impossible;
 For they were carrying their gardens up
 Onto the roof and dancing; scattered round,
 They kept it up all night. I hesitate
 To say what followed; perhaps I am ashamed
 When shame can do no good; but still, I am.
 The girl got pregnant. When I tell you this,
 I also tell you what went on before.

I did not then deny I was to blame,
 But visited the mother of the girl
 At once and promised I would marry her

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As soon as father had returned to us
With his companion; and I swore an oath.
The child, born recently, I have received
Into our house. And by coincidence
There now occurred stroke of real luck;
Chrysis (that's what we call her) had a child;
[One broken line, then a lacuna of about twenty-nine lines, for
which we give a supplement of eleven lines only.]

*But her poor baby died in a few days
And she has gladly taken Plangon's on
And nurses it as though it were her own.
But I must go and look for Parmenon,
Whom I have sent ahead to find out news
About my father, who's due home just now.*

[Exit to the harbour

*Enter CHRYYSIS from DEMEAS' house and soliloquizes for some lines,
until she sees MOSCHION returning with PARMENON from the harbour.
She withdraws and overhears them.*

CHRYYSIS. *I hear that Demeas will soon be back.*

*I wonder what will happen when he sees
The baby? He will think it's mine and ask
Who is the father. If he learns the truth—
But who's that on the path? It's Moschion.
He's hurrying home with Parmenon. I'll wait
And overhear what they are going to say.*

60

MOSCHION. Did you see father, Parmenon, yourself?

PARMENON. Did you not hear me? Yes.

MOSCHION.

Our neighbour too?

PARMENON. They're here.

That's good.

PARMENON.

Then you must be a man

And straightaway put in a word about
Your marriage.

MOSCHION. How? I'm nervous now the time
Has come.

PARMENON. What do you mean?

I am ashamed

MOSCHION.

To tell my father.

PARMENON [*shouts in indignation*]. What about the girl
You've wronged and the girl's mother?—Why, you wimp,
You're trembling!

CHRYYSIS [*comes forward*]. What are you shouting for, you wretch?

PARMENON. So Chrysis is here too! You want to know

70

Why I am shouting? That's ridiculous!

I want the marriage celebrated now
And him to stop his weeping at the door;
I want him to remember what he swore—
That he would go himself to sacrifice,
Put garlands on his head, cut up the cake;*
So don't you think I have reasons enough
For shouting?

MOSCHION. Well, I'll do it all; no need
For words.

CHRYYSIS. I'm sure you will.

MOSCHION. And what about
The baby? Shall we leave it just as now,
For her to rear and say that she's its mother?

CHRYYSIS. Why not?

MOSCHION. My father will be cross with you.

80

CHRYYSIS. He'll soon get over that. He's hopelessly
In love, my friend, as badly as you are.

That makes even the angriest man come round
Quite soon and make it up. I think I would
Put up with anything rather than see
The baby brought up by a nurse in some
Foul tenement.*

[Lacuna of twenty-three lines, for which we give a supplement of
eleven lines; then seven mutilated.]

*So come on, Parmenon,
We must go in, if Demeas is on his way,
And get things ready for him. For perhaps
He'll be less angry when he hears our news,
If he arrives to find all spick and span.*

[*Exeunt CHRYYSIS and PARMENON to DEMEAS' house;*
MOSCHION soliloquizes

MOSCHION. *They're nearly here. I must make up my mind
What I'm to say to father. How can I
Persuade him to accept my marriage plan?
He won't agree to Plangon as my bride
And he'll be livid if he finds I've had
A child by her. I want to bring him round;
... You might accept ...*

*I might declare that no one in the world's
Unhappier; 'I'll hang myself at once.'*

90

Only an orator . . . of a friend.

I am not good enough for this debate.

I'll go to some deserted spot and train.

I've really got a testing time ahead.

[*Exit MOSCHION to the country*

*Enter DEMEAS and NIKERATOS with attendants from the direction of
the harbour.*

DEMEAS. Well, don't you see the change of scenery
And feel the difference from those ghastly spots?
Pontos! Nothing but fat old men and heaps
Of fish! And boring business affairs!

Byzantium! just wormwood,* everything
There bitter! God! But here the poor enjoy
Pure happiness. Athens, my dearest home,
May you enjoy all blessings you deserve,
So we who love our city may become
The happiest of all men. [To his attendants] Get inside.

100

[*Exeunt attendants to the houses of DEMEAS and NIKERATOS*

[To one who lingers] You half-wit, don't stand staring at me
there.

NIKERATOS. The thing that most surprised me, Demeas,
About that place was this: sometimes you could
Not see the sun for ages. A thick mist,
It seemed, caused darkness.

DEMEAS. Yes, there's nothing there

To see that's wonderful, and so the sun
Allowed them just the minimum of light.

110

NIKERATOS. How right you are!

DEMEAS.

Let's leave these subtleties

To worry other men. But what d'you mean to do
 About the matter we were talking of?

NIKERATOS. You mean your young man's marriage?

DEMEAS.

Yes, I do.

NIKERATOS. I've never changed my mind. Let's fix a day
 And do it, and good luck to them.

DEMEAS.

Are we

Resolved on this?

NIKERATOS.

I am.

DEMEAS.

And so am I

And made my mind up earlier than you.

NIKERATOS. Then call me when you leave the house.

[One broken line, then a lacuna of about fourteen lines.]

DEMEAS.

*I'll stay.**There are a few things I must think about.*

[Exit NIKERATOS to his house; DEMEAS soliloquizes

*There goes an honest man; he may be poor
 But I shall be delighted if my son
 Is married to his daughter. I don't think
 The boy is likely to object to this;
 He's always done what I have asked of him.
 I'd better go inside and find him now,
 Since I can see a crowd of drunken youths
 Approaching; I won't stay to clash with them.*

[Exit into his house

CHORAL INTERLUDE

ACT 2

Enter DEMEAS, talking to himself, from his house and MOSCHION from the country. DEMEAS withdraws and listens to MOSCHION soliloquizing.

*DEMEAS. I can't find Moschion at home and so
 I've come out here to look for him and learn*

*What's happened while I've been away and how
It is that Chrysis has a child. Who can
The father be? I will not keep her here.
Out she'll go and take her child as well.
But there he is. He's talking to himself;
I shall withdraw and listen to his words.*

[He withdraws]

MOSCHION. *I went away to put some practice in*

120

But now I'm back and still have not rehearsed

One of the things I had in mind just now.

For when I was outside the town alone,

I started, in my mind, to sacrifice,

Invite my friends to join the wedding feast,

*Send off the women for the lustral water,**

Walk round distributing the cake, and hum

The wedding song sometimes. I was an ass.

And when I'd had enough of this—good god!

There's father. Then he's heard me. Hello, dad.

DEMEAS. Hello, my son.

MOSCHION. Why look so grim?

DEMEAS.

Why grim?

130

It seems I have a mistress who's a wife,

And never knew it.

MOSCHION. What? A wife? I don't

Know what you mean.

DEMEAS. It seems I've had a son,

Born secretly. Well, she can go to hell,

Out of the house, and take the baby too.

MOSCHION. Oh, no!

DEMEAS. 'Oh no?' Do you expect I'll rear

A bastard child for someone else in my

Own home? That's shocking, not my way at all.

MOSCHION. For heaven's sake, who is legitimate

Of all of us, who illegitimate,

If he is born a man?

DEMEAS. You surely must

Be joking.

MOSCHION. No, I'm deadly serious.

Birth, as I see it, makes no difference.
 If you look fairly at the situation,
 The good man is legitimate, the bad
 Man's both a bastard and a slave as well.

[Nine lines mutilated beyond repair, a lacuna of about sixteen lines, then eight more badly mutilated; supplements speculative.]

*So don't turn Chrysis out; keep her and keep
 Her baby. Think—she may not be to blame,
 If she was raped. I'm sure she loves you still.*

DEMEAS. *You say she loves me? Well, maybe you're right.*

*I'm sure I'm still in love with her. But I'll
 Not let her stay and keep the child, by god.
 Now, Moschion, there is another thing
 I must discuss with you. You're old enough
 To marry now; indeed, you should do so,
 And I am going to suggest a match
 Which would please me and satisfy you too.
 What would you say to taking as your bride
 Our neighbour's daughter, Plangon?*

MOSCHION.

What do you say?

There's nothing I'd like better in the world.

DEMEAS. *You really mean this? You are serious?*

MOSCHION. *I love the girl and long to marry her.*

*So let's be quick; I beg you, don't put off
 The wedding.*

DEMEAS. *Don't you hustle me, my boy.*

MOSCHION. *I want to meet your wishes, father, and
 To seem in all things an obedient son.*

DEMEAS. *That's a god boy.*

MOSCHION. *Then let's get on with it.*

DEMEAS. *If they agree, you'll marry her all right.*

MOSCHION. *When you've learnt nothing of the affair,
 How can you know I'm serious and help?*

DEMEAS. *'You're serious'? 'Learnt nothing', do you say?*

I understand your meaning, Moschion.

I'll run to him and tell him to begin

The wedding now. We'll play our part.

MOSCHION.

Well said.

So I'll go in and have a ritual wash,
Pour a libation, and put incense on
The fire; and then I'll fetch the bride.

DEMEAS.

Don't go

Until I'm sure her father will agree.

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MOSCHION. He won't oppose you. But it's wrong for me
To stay and be a nuisance here. *I'm off.*

[Exit to the city]

DEMEAS. Mere Accident is like a god, it seems,

And brings fulfilment of a lot of things
We cannot see. I did not know my son
Was so in love;

[Lacuna of about twenty-seven lines.]

this fits in with my plans,
For now we can fulfil what we both want.
Let's hope Nikeratos will not object
To hurrying on the wedding, for the boy
Is so distraught with love he cannot wait.
I'd better find Nikeratos and get
Him to agree to hold the wedding now.
I don't imagine he'll be pleased at this,
But still, for my boy's sake, I'll have a go.
I want to call him out.

[He goes over to the door of NIKERATOS' house and shouts

[The rest of the act is badly mutilated; the supplements speculative.]

Nikeratos,

Come out and join me here in front.

NIKERATOS [*he comes out of his house*]. What for?

DEMEAS. I wish you a good day.

NIKERATOS.

The same to you.

What is it?

DEMEAS. You remember that just now
We did not fix the wedding day?

NIKERATOS.

I do.

DEMEAS. Well, what do you think of holding it today?

You may be sure the boy wants no delay.

NIKERATOS. How? When?

170

DEMEAS.

*He wants the wedding to take place**Quickly and says he'd like it held today.*NIKERATOS. *How can we do that?*

DEMEAS.

*I can see no snag.*NIKERATOS. *No, it's impossible*

DEMEAS.

*It's possible**For me and no less possible for you.**We only have to tell your family.**The preparations need not take too long.*NIKERATOS. *Good god, you really mean this, Demeas?**I'm bound to tell you how it seems to me:**I'm all for haste but must insist on this:**We cannot hold the wedding till we've told**Our friends and seem to do it properly.*DEMEAS. *Nikeratos, if you agree to this,**My gratitude to you will know no bounds.*NIKERATOS. *How am I to decide? I want to fall**In with the wishes of a friend. You're set**On this then, Demeas? Well, I must not**Resist but give way and agree with you.**It's not the time to start an argument.*DEMEAS. *Now you are talking sense, and you will not**Regret what you've decided.*

NIKERATOS.

*So you say;**I hope you're right. We must begin to get**Things ready.*

DEMEAS.

*Parmenon, boy, Parmenon!**Enter PARMENON from Demeas' house.**Go and get garlands, get an animal**For sacrifice and seeds of sesame*—**Buy up the market and then come back here.*PARMENON. *Buy everything? I'll do so, Demeas,**If any's left.*

DEMEAS.

*Be quick about it; now.**And bring a cook.*

PARMENON.

*A cook as well? When I**Have bought the lot?*

DEMEAS.

Yes, when you've bought the lot.

PARMENON. I'll get some cash and run. [Exit into DEMEAS' house
DEMEAS.

Nikeratos,

You've not yet gone to market?

NIKERATOS. I'll go in

And tell my wife to get the house prepared,
Then I'll be on the heels of Parmenon.

[Exit into his house

*Enter PARMENON from DEMEAS' house, carrying a basket; he shouts
to someone inside.*

PARMENON. I don't know anything, except what I've
Been told to do; I'm rushing off there now.

DEMEAS. Persuading his good wife will be a job.

200

But we must not give explanations
Or waste our time. [To PARMENON] You hanging round, boy?
Run!

[Exit PARMENON to the city

Enter NIKERATOS from his house.

NIKERATOS. My wife is nosy, asking me what's up;
She says, 'For god's sake, tell me what's the need
For all this haste?' So what? How she goes on!

[Exit NIKERATOS to the city

[Lacuna of ten lines.]

DEMEAS. What next? I'd better go and tell my son
Nikeratos has grudgingly agreed
To hold the wedding, as we hoped, today.

[Exit into his house

CHORAL INTERLUDE

ACT 3

DEMEAS comes out of his house and launches into a long soliloquy.

DEMEAS. Sailors may be enjoying a fair voyage
When suddenly, out of the blue, a storm

Blows up in force; it shatters those who were
 Just now running before the wind in calm
 And overturns the ship. That's just my case;
 For there I was, about to organize
 The wedding and to make the sacrifice
 To god, and everything was working out
 Just as I wished—but now I hardly know,
 My god, if I am even seeing straight.
 I really don't; but I am coming out
 To tell you what a knock-out blow I've had.

210

[*He goes to the front of the stage to address the spectators*
 It's quite incredible. Consider, friends,
 Whether I'm sane or mad, and took the facts
 All wrong and bring upon myself a great
 Misfortune needlessly. As soon as I
 Had gone into the house, in haste to get
 All ready for the wedding, I explained
 Things to the servants quite straightforwardly
 And told them to get on at once with all
 The necessary work—to clean the house,
 To bake, to get the ritual basket* out.
 They set to willingly enough, of course,
 Although the speed they worked at caused a bit
 Of chaos, just as you'd expect. The child
 Was dumped down on a couch out of the way
 And bawled its head off. And the maids were all
 Shouting at once: 'Flour, water, olive oil,
 Some charcoal, please.' And I myself was there
 Passing them this and that and helping them;
 I happened to have gone into the store,
 From which I was selecting more and stayed
 Inspecting things, so did not leave at once.
 While I was there a woman came downstairs
 Into the room in front of the storeroom.
 It's where the weaving's done, in fact, through which
 You pass to go upstairs or to the stores.
 The woman proved to be Moschion's nurse,
 Who's getting on; she'd been my slave, but now

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She's free. And when she saw the baby there,
Neglected, crying, as she did not know
That I was in the house, she thought it safe
Enough to chatter; she went up to it
And said the usual things; 'My darling child,'
She said, 'You treasure, where's your mummy then?'
She kissed the child and carried it around.
When it stopped crying, she said to herself,
'Dear me, it's just the other day I nursed
Moschion at this age and cuddled him,
And now he has a baby of his own

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[Lacuna of two lines, then three lines mutilated.]

And here it is asleep, safe in my arms.

But why are they neglecting the poor thing?

Just then a servant girl came running in;
She said to her, 'The baby needs a bath.
Dear me, what's this? It's father's wedding day
And you're not caring for the little mite?'
At once the girl said, 'Wretch, don't talk so loud!
Himself is here.' 'Oh no!' nurse whispered 'where?'
'He's in the storeroom'; then she raised her voice,
'Mistress is calling, nurse. [Quietly] Go on, be quick.
He has not heard a thing, that's luck for us.'

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'O what a wagging tongue I have!' she said,
And off she went away, I don't know where.

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And I walked out exactly as I came
To you just now, quite calm, pretending I'd
Not heard or seen a thing. Outside I saw
The Samian girl alone; she held the child
And it was feeding at her breast. So now
I know it's hers, but who the father is,
Whether it's mine or else—I won't say that
To you, my friends, or even think of it,
But now I simply put the facts to you
Of what I heard myself—not angry—yet.

270

I know the young man through and through as one
Who's always in the past been well behaved,
As dutiful to me as he could be.

But then, when I reflect on this, that she
 Who said that had once been Moschion's nurse
 And spoke out of my hearing, as she thought,
 And yet again when I think of the girl
 Who so adores the baby and insists
 That we should rear it, though against my will—
 I'm absolutely done, out of my mind.

[He sees PARMENON entering, followed by the COOK and his ASSISTANT
 But Parmenon is here—how opportune!—
 On his way back from market: I must let
 Him take the men he brings into the house.]

[He withdraws]

Enter PARMENON with the COOK and ASSISTANT.

PARMENON. God, cook, I don't know why you carry knives
 With you. You're sharp enough to chop the lot
 Just with your tongue.

COOK. You wretched ignoramus!

PARMENON. What, me?

COOK. I really think you are a clot.

I ask how many tables you will need,
 How many women will be there, what time
 The dinner will begin, whether we need
 To hire an extra waiter, if you have
 Sufficient crocks, whether the kitchen's roofed,
 And whether all the rest we need is there—

PARMENON. You're chopping me to pieces, my good friend,
 In case you didn't notice, and do so
 Most skilfully.

COOK. Oh, go to hell!

PARMENON. The same
 To you with knobs on! Get along inside!

[Exeunt COOK and ASSISTANT into DEMEAS' house, followed by
 PARMENON. DEMEAS comes forward and calls him]

DEMEAS. Hey, Parmenon!

PARMENON. Did someone call me?

DEMEAS. Yes.

PARMENON. Master, hello.

DEMEAS.

Put down the basket first,

Then come back here.

PARMENON. All right, I will.

[Exit into DEMEAS' house

DEMEAS.

I'm sure

There's nothing of this kind that he'd not know;

There's no such busybody in the world.

300

But there's the door again; he's coming out.

PARMENON [speaking over his shoulder to CHRYYSIS inside]. Chrysis, you give the cook whatever he

Demands; for heaven's sake, don't let old nurse

Get near the wine. [Turning to DEMEAS] Well, master, what's to do?

DEMEAS. You ask me what's to do? Come here, away
A little from the door; a little more.

PARMENON. There.

DEMEAS. Listen, Parmenon. I do not want
To whip you, no, I really don't for lots
Of reasons.

PARMENON. Whip me? Why, what have I done?

DEMEAS. You're hiding something from me. That I know.

PARMENON. I am? I swear by Dionysus and
By our Apollo here* and Saviour Zeus,
And by Asklepios—

310

DEMEAS. Stop! Swear me no oaths!

I'm not just guessing.

PARMENON. May I never be—

DEMEAS. You, look at me

PARMENON. All right, I'm looking now.

DEMEAS. Whose is the baby?

PARMENON. Ah!

DEMEAS. I'm asking you

Whose is the baby.

PARMENON. Chrysis'.

DEMEAS. And who is

The father?

PARMENON. You, she says.

DEMEAS. You've had it now;

You're lying to me.

PARMENON.

Me?

DEMEAS.

I know it all.

I've learnt that it is Moschion's, that you
Are in the know, and she is bringing up
The brat for him.

PARMENON.

Who says so?

DEMEAS.

Everyone.

Just answer me one thing: is this the case?

PARMENON. Master, it is; we hoped to keep it dark—

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DEMEAS. To keep it dark! [He shouts into the house] Hey, one of you,
give me

A strap to whip this godless rogue.

Enter a SLAVE with a whip.

PARMENON.

No, don't.

DEMEAS. By god, I'll brand you.

PARMENON.

Brand me?

DEMEAS.

Straightaway.

PARMENON. I've had it.

[*He escapes and runs off*

DEMEAS.

Where're you running to, you rogue?

[*To the SLAVE, who pursues him*] Catch him! O citadel of Kekrops'
land,*

Encircling Air, O—Shouting, Demeas?

Why shout, you fool? Restrain yourself. Bear up.

For Moschion's not wronging you. [*To the audience*] Perhaps
My words seem wild, my friends, but they are true.

For if he did this of his own freewill,

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Or else infatuated, or hating me,

He'd still be shameless, still in the same state

Of mind and ready to do battle with me now.

But as it is, he made a full defence

When happily agreeing to the plan

I sprang on him. For he was in hot haste

Not since he was in love, as I thought then,

But eager to escape that Helen* of mine

And get away from her; for she's to blame

For what has happened; she got hold of him

When he'd been drinking, yes, that's obvious,

And lost his self-control. Neat wine and youth
Result in many a foolish action, when
They have at hand to help them one who's schemed
To bring him down. I simply cannot believe
That he, so well behaved and self-controlled
Towards all others, would treat me like this,
Not if he were ten times adopted, not
My natural son. No, it's not his birth
I'm thinking of but his good character.
The woman's just a whore, a pestilence.
Why waste my breath on her? She'll not last long.
Now, Demeas, now you must be a man.
Forget you've missed her, finish with your love,
And hide the trouble which has come on us
As far as maybe for your dear son's sake,
And throw this wonder-girl from Samos out
Head first, out of the house to feed the crows.
You've got a reason—that she's kept the child.
Give nothing else away. So bite your lip,
Bear up, and bravely see the whole thing through.

340

350

Enter the cook from DEMEAS' house, looking for PARMENON.

COOK. Surely the fellow's here, before the doors?

HEY, Parmenon! The man's deserted me,
And never gave a helping hand at all.

DEMEAS. Out of my way!

[DEMEAS rushes into the house to find CHRYYSIS]

COOK. Heavens above, what's this? 360

Some lunatic old man's gone tearing in;
Whatever's up? Oh well, it's no concern
Of mine.

[Loud shouts from inside the house

Good god, he really must be mad;
At least he's shouting loud enough. Wow! All
That crockery I've just set out, suppose
He breaks the lot to smithereens, that would
Be a good joke! But there's the door—O, damn
You, Parmenon, for fetching me here! I'll
Move back a bit.

[He retires to the back of the stage

Enter DEMEAS, driving CHRYYSIS before him; she holds the baby and is followed by the NURSE.

DEMEAS. Get out! D'you hear?

CHRYYSIS. Oh dear,

Wherever to?

DEMEAS. Oh, go to hell!

CHRYYSIS. Poor me!

DEMEAS [aside]. Yes, poor indeed. Her tears do really make

370

Me pity her. [To CHRYYSIS] I'll stop you, yes, I will—

CHRYYSIS. From doing what?

DEMEAS. Nothing. You've got the child
And nurse; get out!

CHRYYSIS. Because I kept the child?

DEMEAS. Because of that and—

CHRYYSIS. 'And'?

DEMEAS. Because of that.

COOK [aside]. Ah that's the trouble then; I get it now.

DEMEAS. You did not know how to behave when you
Enjoyed such luxury.

CHRYYSIS. I didn't know?

What do you mean?

DEMEAS. You came here, Chrysis, dressed
In a simple linen smock—you follow me?

CHRYYSIS. So what?

DEMEAS. Then I was all in all to you,
When you were badly off.

CHRYYSIS. And now who is?

DEMEAS. Don't bandy words with me. You've got all your
Own things and I will add some servant girls
And gold. Now go away, out of my house!

380

COOK [aside]. Some nasty temper here. I must go up
To them. [He approaches DEMEAS] Consider, friend—

DEMEAS. Are you addressing me?

COOK. You needn't bite me.

DEMEAS [disregarding the COOK]. Yes, some other girl

Will be delighted with my gifts, Chrysis,
And sacrifice in gratitude to god.

COOK [aside]. What is he on about?

DEMEAS.

You've borne a son,

You've all you want.

COOK [aside]. Not biting yet! [To Demeas] But still—

DEMEAS. I'll smash your head in if you speak to me.

COOK. And quite right too. I'm going in now, look!

[Exit into Demeas' house

DEMEAS. A fine figure you'll cut! Yes, you will see

390

Exactly who you are when you're in town.

The other girls, not in your style, Chrysis,

Who only earn ten drachmas, all run off

To dinner parties and they drink wine neat

Until they die or, if they don't accept

Such invitations readily, they starve.

You'll learn, I'm sure, no less than them

And realize what you are and what a fool

You've been. [CHRYYSIS tries to approach him] Stay there!

[Exit Demeas into his house and bolts the door

CHRYYSIS.

Oh dear, oh, what ill luck!

Enter NIKERATOS from the city leading a scraggy sheep.

NIKERATOS. This sheep here will provide all the accustomed

Offerings* to the gods and goddesses,

400

When it is sacrificed. It's got some blood,

And gall bladder enough, some splendid bones,

A great big spleen; and that's what is required

For the Olympians. Then, for my friends

To have a taste, I shall chop up the skin

And send it them. That's all I shall have left.

But, god! what's this? Chrysis is standing here

In tears. It's her all right. [To CHRYYSIS] What's up?

CHRYYSIS. That honest friend of yours has thrown me out,

That's what it is.

NIKERATOS. Good god! Who? Demeas?

CHRYYSIS. Yes, him.

NIKERATOS. But why?

CHRYYSIS. Because I kept the child.

NIKERATOS. The women told me you'd taken up the child

410

And that you're keeping it. You idiot!

But he's soft-hearted.

CHRYYSIS.

He was not cross at once,

But later on. Just now he said I was

To get things in the house all ready for

The wedding; but, while I was doing this,

He fell upon me like a lunatic,

And now he's locked me out.

NIKERATOS.

He must be sick.

The Black Sea's not at all a healthy place.

Come with me to my wife. Cheer up! Don't fret!

He'll cease this madness soon when he reflects

And gives some thought to what he's doing now.

420

[Exit NIKERATOS into his house together with CHRSYIS, the baby, the
NURSE, and the sheep]

CHORAL INTERLUDE

ACT 4

Enter NIKERATOS from his house, speaking over his shoulder to his wife.

NIKERATOS. Wife, you'll wear me all to pieces. I'm off now to
tackle him.*

[*He soliloquizes*]

I would not have had this happen if you'd offered me a
fortune,

Heavens, no, I really wouldn't. When the wedding's just
begun,

Here's a most untimely omen come on us; a girl's arrived
At our house, thrown out by someone, with a baby in her
arms.

So there're tears and all the women have completely gone to
pieces.

Demeas has proved a shit and, god, I'll make him pay for this.

*Enter MOSCHION from the city; he does not see NIKERATOS
and soliloquizes*

MOSCHION. Will the sun never start setting? What can be the explanation?

Has the night forgot its function? What an endless afternoon!

Shall I go and bath a third time? I have nothing else to do.

NIKERATOS [*comes forward*]. Moschion, I'm glad to see you. 430

MOSCHION. Do we hold the wedding now?

Parmemon told me just lately, when he met me in the town.

Can't I go and fetch your daughter?

NIKERATOS. Don't you know what's happened here?

MOSCHION. No, I don't. What?

NIKERATOS. What, you ask me? Something horrible's occurred.

MOSCHION. God! What is it? I know nothing, since I've only just got back.

NIKERATOS. Dearest boy, your father's driven Chrysis from his house just now.

MOSCHION. That's incredible.

NIKERATOS. It's happened.

MOSCHION. Why?

NIKERATOS. Because she kept the child.

MOSCHION. Where's she now then?

NIKERATOS. She's with us here.

MOSCHION. What a shocking piece of news!

How amazing!

NIKERATOS. If it really seems to you so awful, then—

*Enter DEMEAS from his house, in a rage, shouting back to his servants,
who are in tears.*

DEMEAS. If I get a stick, I'll teach you, knock the tears out of your eyes. 440

What's this nonsense? Now get cracking. Give the cook a helping hand.

[Ironically] Tears are certainly in order, such a treasure's left our house!

All the facts tell us this clearly.

[*He turns to the statue of Apollo which stands before the house*
Dear Apollo, greetings to you,

Grant, I pray you, that the wedding which we are about to hold

May for all of us be lucky. [To the audience] I shall hold the wedding still,

Friends, and swallow down my anger. [To Apollo] Master, watch me, see that I

Do not give myself away now; make me sing the wedding hymn.

Not that in my present temper, I shall sing it very well.

450

Never mind. She'll not come back here.

[MOSCHION and NIKERATOS, who have been discussing what to do, approach DEMEAS

NIKERATOS.

Moschion, go on, you first.

MOSCHION. Very well. [To DEMEAS] Why are you, father, doing this?

DEMEAS. What's that, Moschion?

MOSCHION. Doing what, you ask? Then tell me, Why has Chrysis left the house?

DEMEAS [aside]. Clearly someone's acting for her as a go-between; that's bad.

[To MOSCHION] That's no business of yours, boy, it is only my concern.

Why this nonsense? [Aside] This is awful. He is helping them to wrong me.

MOSCHION. What d'you say?

DEMEAS [still aside]. That's clear enough now. Why should he approach me for her?

He should surely be delighted this has happened.

MOSCHION.

What d'you think

All our friends will say about this, when they learn—

DEMEAS.

My friends, Moschion,

I suppose—leave that to me, boy.

MOSCHION.

I should not be acting rightly,

If I let you carry on so.

460

DEMEAS.

Then you'll stop me?

MOSCHION.

Yes, I shall.

DEMEAS [aside]. Look at that! This takes the biscuit! Worse than what he said before!

MOSCHION. You should not give way to anger.

NIKERATOS.

Demeas, he is quite right.

MOSCHION. In you go, Nikeratos, and tell the girl to run home here.

DEMEAS. Moschion, I tell you, drop it; drop it, Moschion, I say; For the third time I repeat it; I know everything.

MOSCHION.

Know what?

DEMEAS. Say no more to me.

MOSCHION.

I have to.

DEMEAS.

Have to? Am I not to be

Master here?

MOSCHION. Grant me this favour.

DEMEAS.

Favour! such as asking me,

'Go away from your own house, please, leave us two here on our own.'

Let me carry on the wedding—let me, if you've any sense.

MOSCHION. Yes, I'll let you, but I'm anxious Chrysis should be here with us.

DEMEAS. Chrysis?

MOSCHION. It's for your sake mostly I insist on having her.

DEMEAS. Now we know; it's clear as daylight. Be my witness, Loxias:*

Someone's plotting with my enemies. Help! I'll burst a blood vessel!

MOSCHION. What d'you mean?

DEMEAS.

Am I to tell you?

MOSCHION.

Yes.

DEMEAS [*he leads MOSCHION aside*].

Then come this way.

MOSCHION.

Speak on.

DEMEAS. Right. The baby's yours, I'm certain. I have heard from Parmenon,

Who himself was in the secret. Don't you play these games with me.

MOSCHION. How is Chrysis wronging you then, if I'm father to this child?

DEMEAS. Who is wronging me? It's you, boy—

MOSCHION [*disregarding DEMEAS' interruption*]. How is she responsible?

DEMEAS. What d'you say? Have you no conscience?

480

MOSCHION.

Why're you shouting?

Why, you scum?

DEMEAS.

Why, do you ask? Then tell me whether you take all the blame yourself?

And you dare to say this to me while you look me in the face?

Have you really so completely turned against me?

MOSCHION.

Turned against you?

Why do you say that?

DEMEAS. Why, you ask me? Do you dare to ask me this?

MOSCHION. Yes, it's not an awful scandal; thousands, dad, have done the same.

DEMEAS. God, how shameless! Now I ask you, here before this audience,

Who's the mother of your baby? Tell it to Nikeratos,

If you think there's no great scandal.

490

MOSCHION [aside]. That, my god, will cause a scandal, If I tell him. He'll be livid when he finds out all the facts.

NIKERATOS [*bursting in on the conversation*]. Oh, you worst of human beings! Now at last I start to guess

What has happened, what an outrage he's committed.

MOSCHION. That's the end.

DEMEAS. Now, Nikeratos, you see it?

NIKERATOS. Yes, I do. Most wicked crime!

O incestuous beds of Tereus, Oedipus, Thyestes,* and All the rest we've ever heard of—you have made them seem nothing!

MOSCHION. Me?

NIKERATOS. You really dared to act so, had the bloody nerve for this?

You should take Amyntor's rage on,* Demeas, and blind the boy.

DEMEAS [to MOSCHION]. You're to blame that all's discovered.

NIKERATOS. Is there nothing you'd not do?

Anyone you'd keep your hands off? Then am I to let my girl Marry you? I'd rather suffer—absit omen*—Diomnestus As my son-in-law, a marriage all would think the bottom end.

DEMEAS [to MOSCHION]. Wronged by you, I held myself in.

NIKERATOS. Demeas, you're just a slave.

If my bed had been defiled, I'd make sure that he would never
Once again abuse another, nor the girl who slept with him.
Come tomorrow, first to get there, I'd be selling off the whore,
And at once renounce my offspring, publicly; no barbers'
shop,

510

No stoa* empty; all would gather, sitting round from sunrise
on,

Gossiping about me only, saying that Nikeratos
Had been proved a man, who'd rightly prosecuted you for
murder.

MOSCHION. Murder!

NIKERATOS. Yes, I judge it murder, when a son rebels
like this.

MOSCHION [*aside*]. God, my throat is dry with terror and I'm
frozen stiff with fright.

NIKERATOS. And, what's worse, it's I who welcomed in my home
the very girl

Who was guilty of this outrage.

DEMEAS. Throw her out, Nikeratos,
Think yourself as wronged as I am; be a proper friend to me.

NIKERATOS. I'll explode if I but see her. [To MOSCHION] Can you
look me in the face,

Savage, yes, and truly Thracian?* Let me pass.

[*He rushes past MOSCHION into his house*

MOSCHION. For heaven's sake,

Father, hear me.

520

DEMEAS. I'll hear nothing.

MOSCHION. Even if what you suspect
Never happened? I'm beginning now at last to understand.

DEMEAS. Never happened?

MOSCHION. Chrysis is not mother to the child she tends;
She is doing me a favour, saying it belongs to her.

DEMEAS. What do you say?

MOSCHION. The simple truth, sir.

DEMEAS. Why's she doing this for you?

MOSCHION. I don't want to tell the reason, but escape the greater
charge

And admit only the lesser, if you clearly learn the truth

Of what happened.

DEMEAS.

Hurry up then. Tell me quickly or I'll die.

MOSCHION. I'm the father, and the mother is Nikeratos' daughter.

But I wished to keep it secret.

DEMEAS.

What do you say?

MOSCHION.

What really happened.

DEMEAS. See you do not try to fool me.

MOSCHION.

Try when you can check the facts?

What shall I gain now by lying?

DEMEAS.

Nothing—someone's coming out

NIKERATOS staggers out of his house, lamenting in tragic style.

NIKERATOS. Misery! What have I seen there! Maddened, I am
rushing out,

Struck at heart with pain unlooked for.

DEMEAS [aside].

What on earth's he going to say?

NIKERATOS. I've just found inside my daughter feeding the baby at
her breast.

DEMEAS [aside]. So it's true.

MOSCHION.

You hear that, father?

DEMEAS.

Moschion, you did not wrong me,

I wronged you, by my suspicions.

NIKERATOS [*seeing DEMEAS at last*]. Demeas, I come to you.

MOSCHION [aside]. I'm away.

DEMEAS.

Keep up your spirits.

MOSCHION.

Seeing him I'm all but dead.

[*Exit to the city*

DEMEAS [*to NIKERATOS*]. What's the matter?

NIKERATOS. I've just come on my own daughter in the house
Feeding the baby at her breast there.

DEMEAS.

Well, perhaps, it was just play.

NIKERATOS. Certainly she was not playing; when she saw me
coming in,

Straightaway she fell down fainting.

DEMEAS.

Well, maybe, perhaps, she thought—

NIKERATOS. Oh! 'Perhaps, perhaps'—you'll kill me.

DEMEAS [aside].

I'm responsible for this.

NIKERATOS. What d'you say?

DEMEAS. I think your story is beyond the bounds of belief.

NIKERATOS. But I saw it.

DEMEAS.

Don't talk drivvel.

NIKERATOS.

This is not an empty tale.

I'll go back and—

DEMEAS. Just a minute. Here's the answer, friend—[NIKERATOS *rushes into his house*] He's gone.

Everything is upside down now. It's the end. When he finds out All the facts, he'll be so angry, heavens, he will shriek aloud.

He is rough, no finer feelings, always calls a spade a spade. 550

Really, I should have suspected something like this; damn it all.

I deserve to die, by heaven. [NIKERATOS *shouts aloud from in the house*] O good lord, that was a shout!

I was right. Fire, fire, he's yelling; threatening to burn the child.

I shall see my grandson roasted. Now he's at the door again.

NIKERATOS *rushes out of his house.*

There, the man's a thunderbolt or like a whirlwind

NIKERATOS.

Demeas,

Chrysis is conspiring with them, doing the most dreadful things.

DEMEAS. What d'you mean?

NIKERATOS. She has persuaded wife and daughter to admit Nothing and she's grabbed the baby, won't let go, and says she won't

Hand it over. So don't wonder, if you find I murder her. 560

DEMEAS. Murder Chrysis?

NIKERATOS.

Yes, she's plotting with them.

DEMEAS.

Don't, Nikeratos!

NIKERATOS. Had to warn you this might happen.

[*He rushes back into the house*
Help, he's melancholy mad.

DEMEAS. In he's rushed. How should one cope with such a crisis? I am sure

I have never been so flummoxed. Far the best thing is to say Clearly what has really happened. Heavens, there's the door again.

Enter CHRYYSIS from NIKERATOS' house, running and holding the baby.
 CHRYYSIS. Misery! What shall I do now? Where am I to flee? He
 will

Take my baby from me.
 DEMEAS.

Chrysis, come this way!

CHRYYSIS.

Who's calling me?

DEMEAS. Run inside.

Enter NIKERATOS from his house, armed with a stick.

NIKERATOS.

You, where're you fleeing?

DEMEAS [aside].

Heavens, I shall have to fight 570

A duel today apparently. [To NIKERATOS] Who're you chasing?
 What d'you want?

NIKERATOS. Demeas, get out! Just let me get the baby in my
 power,

Then I'll make the women tell me.

DEMEAS.

No.

NIKERATOS.

You're going to hit me then?

DEMEAS. Yes, I shall. [To CHRYYSIS] Get in, you, quickly.

NIKERATOS.

I shall hit you in return.

DEMEAS. Hurry, Chrysis; he's the stronger.

[Exit CHRYYSIS with the baby into DEMEAS' house

NIKERATOS.

You began this — Witness, all!

DEMEAS. Take a stick against a freeborn woman! and you're
 chasing her.

NIKERATOS. You're accusing me quite falsely.

DEMEAS.

So are you.

NIKERATOS.

Bring out the child.

DEMEAS. That's absurd. It's mine.

NIKERATOS.

It isn't.

DEMEAS.

Yes, it is.

NIKERATOS [to audience].

O, gentlemen—

DEMEAS. Shout away!

NIKERATOS. I'll go inside and kill the girl. What else is left? 580

DEMEAS. There, again that wicked notion. I won't let you.

Where're you off to?

Stop!

NIKERATOS. Don't lay a finger on me!

Come, control yourself.

DEMEAS.

It's clear,

NIKERATOS. Demeas, you're wronging me and you are in the plot yourself.

DEMEAS. Well then, ask me all about it; don't go bothering the girl.

NIKERATOS. Has your son bamboozled me then?

DEMEAS.

Nonsense! He will take the girl.

No, it's not like that. Come on now, walk around with me a bit.

NIKERATOS. I'm to walk around with you?

DEMEAS.

And pull yourself together, friend.

Tell me now, Nikeratos, have you never heard the tragic
Poets tell how Zeus took shape once as a shower of gold* and
pouring

590

Through the roof seduced a maiden who was shut inside the room?

NIKERATOS. Yes, so what?

DEMEAS. We must be ready, I suppose, for anything.

Has your roof a leak? Consider.

NIKERATOS.

Yes, it mostly leaks. How's that

Relevant to what you're saying?

DEMEAS.

Sometimes Zeus takes shape as gold,

Other times he's simply water. Now you see? He did the deed.

There's the problem solved quite quickly.

NIKERATOS.

You are fooling me.

DEMEAS.

Good lord, no.

I would not do that. But surely you are just as good as him,
Danae's old father, aren't you? If he honoured her, your
daughter—

NIKERATOS. Moschion has really fooled me, blast it—

DEMEAS. No, the boy will have her;

Never fear. But what has happened is, be sure, divinely
sanctioned.

600

Thousands I can name are walking in the midst of us who are
Children of the gods. You think that what has happened is
unique.

First of all, there's Chairephon,* who dines abroad and never
pays.

Don't you think that he's a god then?
 NIKERATOS. So it seems; what can I say?
 I'll not fight with you for nothing.
 DEMEAS. That's good sense, Nikeratos.
 Androcles* lives on for ever, runs and skips and interferes;
 Walks around with hair still raven, wouldn't die if it were
 white,
 Not if someone slit his gizzard. He's a god, you must admit.
 Pray that this may turn out lucky. Burn some incense, sacrifice.
 Very soon my son'll be coming for his bride.
 NIKERATOS. There's nothing for it;
 I must do what you're proposing.
 DEMEAS. Now you're really showing sense
 NIKERATOS. If I'd caught him at the time, tho'—
 DEMEAS. Stop such thoughts and don't get cross.
 Go inside and make things ready.
 NIKERATOS. Right.
 DEMEAS. And so shall I.
 NIKERATOS. Then go.
 DEMEAS. You're no fool—and I am grateful. Thanks to all the
 gods above, [Exit NIKERATOS into his house
 None of what I thought had happened proved to have a grain of
 truth.
 [Exit into his house

CHORAL INTERLUDE

ACT 5

Enter MOSCHION, talking to himself.

MOSCHION. I was delighted then, when I was freed
 Of that false charge, and thought I'd had
 Some luck. But now I'm more in my right mind
 And I reflect, I'm quite beside myself
 And furious at the wrongs my father thought

I'd done. So if there were no difficulty
About the girl and there were not a mass
Of obstacles—my oath, my love, our long
Friendship, by all of which I am held fast,
He'd not accuse me to my face again
Like this, but I'd be off, out of his way,
Leave here for Baktra or for Karia*
And live there as a soldier, spear in hand.

But as it is, I'll not indulge in such
Heroics, for your sake, my dearest girl;
It can't be done, and Love, who rules my heart,
Forbids me to. But all the same I must
Not altogether overlook the slight
And take it with a coward's humility.

630

I want to frighten him, with words at least,
By saying that I'm off to serve abroad.
In future he will always take good care
To treat me with more fairness, when he sees
That I don't take this as a little thing.
But Parmenon's here, just at the right time,
The man I wanted most of all to see.

640

Enter PARMENON from the country; he does not see MOSCHION.

PARMENON. Almighty god, in what a foolish way
I have behaved, and how contemptibly!
I had done nothing wrong but got into
A fright and ran away from master's wrath.
What had I done to justify such fear?
Let us consider, clearly, point by point,
Thus: master led a freeborn girl astray;
Does Parmenon do wrong here? surely not.
The girl got pregnant; that is not his fault.
The baby was then brought into our house;
It's Moschion who brought it in, not me.
One of the household said she'd borne the child;
What fault has Parmenon committed here?
Why, none. Why did you scamper then, you fool
And utter coward? That is ridiculous.

650

He threatened he would brand me; ah, you've got
 There now; it does not make the slightest bit
 Of difference, whether it be fair or not
 For me to suffer this—not a nice thing
 In either case.

MOSCHION. Hey, you!

PARMENON. Good day to you.

MOSCHION. Stop all this nonsense and go in at once.

PARMENON. What for?

MOSCHION. To bring me here my army cloak
 And sword.

PARMENON. Bring you your sword?

MOSCHION. That's right, and get
 A move on too.

660

PARMENON. Whatever for?

MOSCHION. Go on,
 And do what I have told you and don't breathe
 A word.

PARMENON. What's up?

MOSCHION. If I can find a whip—

PARMENON. Oh no. I'm going.

MOSCHION. Get a move on then.

[Exit PARMENON into DEMEAS' house

My father will be here quite soon; he'll beg
 Me not to go; that's clear. But for a time
 He'll beg in vain; he'll have to; then, when
 I decide, I shall give way to him. There's just
 One thing—I must be plausible, and that
 By god, I simply cannot do. But this
 Is it; yes, that's the door; he's coming out.

Enter PARMENON from DEMEAS' house.

PARMENON. You're completely out of date with what is
 happening, I believe;*

670

As you have not heard precisely and don't know the way things
 go,

You upset yourself for nothing, drive yourself into despair.

MOSCHION. Where's the gear?

PARMENON. They are now starting wedding celebrations for you.
Wine's amixing, incense smoking, sacrifices have begun;
Offerings already burning in Hephaistos' flame.*

MOSCHION. The gear, boy?

PARMENON. It's for you they've long been waiting. Are you off
to fetch the bride?

Lucky you! You've no more trouble. So take heart. What do
you want?

MOSCHION. Villain, you insist on giving me advice?

[*He strikes PARMENON on the face*

PARMENON. Help! Moschion,

What's that for?

MOSCHION. Run in and quickly bring the stuff I told you to.

PARMENON. Now you've cut my lip.

Still talking rubbish, you?

PARMENON.

I'm on my way.

God, a fine reward I'm given for the news I brought. 680

[*PARMENON goes towards DEMEAS' house but seeing through the door the wedding preparations in train, he stops*

MOSCHION.

Still here?

PARMENON. They are starting on the wedding, really.

MOSCHION. That again! Do bring me

News of something else!

[*Exit PARMENON into DEMEAS' house*

My father will be here in half a minute.

Just suppose he does not beg me, gentlemen, to stay at home,
But in rage he lets me go—I never thought of that. Then what?
Probably he would not do this. But supposing that he did?
Anything can happen. Heavens, I should look a proper fool,
If I had to go about and eat my words.

Enter PARMENON from DEMEAS' house.

PARMENON.

There! Here they are—

Cloak and sword. You take them from me.

MOSCHION.

Give them here. Did anyone

In the house catch sight of you there?

PARMENON.

No one.

MOSCHION.

No one, are you sure?

PARMENON. Yes, I'm sure.

MOSCHION.

What are you saying? Oh, god blast you!

PARMENON.

On your way!

You just keep on talking rubbish.

Enter DEMEAS from his house in a state.

DEMEAS.

Well, where is he? Tell me where. 690

[He sees MOSCHION with cloak and sword

Heavens, what is this?

PARMENON [to MOSCHION]. Go quickly!

DEMEAS.

What's the meaning of this gear?

What's the matter? Tell me truly, do you mean to go away?

PARMENON. As you see, he is already marching and is on his road.

Now I too must say goodbye to friends inside; I'm going in.

*[Exit into DEMEAS' house*DEMEAS. Moschion, your anger makes you dearer, and I don't
blame youIf you are distressed that you have been accused wrongly by
me.

All the same you must consider who you feel so bitter to.

I'm your father; it was I who took you as a little child,

I who raised you. If your journey through this life has been a
joy,

I it was who gave you this, so you should tolerate my ways, 700

Even when they've hurt you badly, bearing with me like a son.

I accused you then unjustly; I was misled, wrong and mad.

But remember this, Moschion: though it meant I wronged the
rest,

It was you alone I thought of, tried to keep all my suspicions

To myself; I did not publish them for enemies to crow.

You're now telling all the world of my mistake, call men to
witness

What a fool I've been. Moschion, that is not what I expect.

Don't remember this day only in my life when I fell down 710

And forget the days before that. There's a lot I still might say,

But no more. You may be certain, if a son obeys a father

Grudgingly, that's wrong, if readily, all men approve.

Enter NIKERATOS, talking back to his wife in the house.

NIKERATOS. Don't annoy me. All's been seen to—baths and sacrifice and wedding;
If the bridegroom ever shows up, he will take the bride and go.
Help, what's this?

DEMEAS. I've no idea, friend.

NIKERATOS. How can you have no idea?

What's this cloak? Can he intend to do a bunk?

DEMEAS. That's what he says.

NIKERATOS. He says that! But who will let him, this seducer, self-confessed.

I'll arrest you now, this instant.

MOSCHION. Go ahead, arrest me, please.

NIKERATOS. Keep on talking nonsense, will you? Drop the sword!

Be quick about it.

DEMEAS. Moschion, for god's sake, drop it. Do not make him angrier.

720

MOSCHION. Let it go then. [He throws down the sword] Your entreaties have succeeded and your prayers.

NIKERATOS. What! our prayers! Come over here, boy.

MOSCHION. Are you going to arrest me?

DEMEAS. No, not that! Bring out the bride here.

NIKERATOS. Do you really think so?

DEMEAS. Yes!

[Exit NIKERATOS into his house to fetch PLANGON

MOSCHION. If you'd done this straightaway, dad, you would not have had just now

All the trouble of that preaching at me.

Enter NIKERATOS pushing PLANGON before him.

NIKERATOS. On you go, my girl!

Now before these witnesses I give this girl to you to hold,
May she bear you lawful children,* and for dowry I will leave,
When I'm dead, all my possessions—that, I pray, may never be,

Since I hope to live for ever.

MOSCHION. Here I take her, hold her, love her.

DEMEAS. All that's left now is to send for lustral water.* Chrysis,
come,
Bring us out the women, bath boy, and the piper. 730

Enter CHRYYSIS from DEMEAS' house.

Someone give us
Torches, garlands, so that we may bring the bride home in
procession.

Enter SLAVE with torches and garlands.

MOSCHION. Someone's here with all the clobber.

DEMEAS. Put a garland on your head,
Deck yourself as for a wedding.

MOSCHION. There I am!

[*Exeunt all in a wedding procession, except for DEMEAS who stays to address the audience*

DEMEAS. You lovely boys,
Youths and old men, altogether loudly give us the applause
Loved by Bacchus,* as the token, gentlemen, of your goodwill.
And I pray the immortal goddess, patron of our finest shows,
Victory, may always favour all the plays that I put on.

A line which can't be placed is quoted by Phrynicus, (*Eclogae*,
p. 187 Lobeck) as from *Samia*:

You, bring the frankincense, and you put on
The fire, Tryphe.

The Girl from Samos (Samia)

- 45 *Pontos*: this is the Black Sea; Demeas had probably gone there for trade.
- 45 *the register*: at the age of 18 all male children of Athenian parents were enrolled on the register of their deme (parish).
- 45 *choregus*: the choregoi were wealthy citizens chosen to organize and pay for the production of plays for the dramatic festivals. They rivalled each other in the splendour of their productions.
- 45 *I led my tribe*: the citizen body of Athens was divided into ten tribes for political and military purposes. Moschion had been elected to command the cavalry division of his tribe (as a phylarch), an honorary position.
- 46 *Samos*: a large island off the coast of Turkey, famous for its courtesans.
- 46 *Adonis' festival*: the festival of Adonis, an eastern fertility deity, was celebrated in Attica in midsummer; women sowed seeds in pots and carried them up to the roof tops; their quick germination symbolized the rebirth of Adonis.
- 48 *sacrifice . . . cake*: wedding ceremonies included preliminary sacrifice, a ritual bath, and a banquet at which guests were given cakes made from sesame seeds and honey.
- 48 *Foul tenement*: unwanted babies were either exposed to die or farmed out to poor foster parents.
- 49 *Byzantium! just wormwood*: merchants en route to or from the Black Sea had to stop at Byzantium (Istanbul) to pay tolls. Wormwood, an extremely bitter herb, flourished round Byzantium.
- 51 *lustral water*: see note on ‘ritual water’ on p. 298.
- 54 *seeds of sesame*: sesame seeds were needed for the ritual wedding cake.
- 56 *ritual basket*: this contained items needed for the sacrifice—the sacrificial knife, barley grains for scattering over the victim’s head, etc.
- 59 *Apollo here*: Parmenon points to the statue of Apollo which stood by the house door.
- 60 *O citadel of Kekrops’ land*: quoted from a lost play of Euripides. In his passion Demeas launches into the language of tragedy but quickly recalls himself (Kekrops was a mythical king of Athens; his citadel is the Akropolis, to which Demeas could gesture from the theatre).

- 60 *Helen*: Helen, who deserted her husband Menelaus and fled to Troy with Paris, was the archetype of the faithless woman.
- 63 *the accustomed | Offerings*: when an animal was sacrificed, the Olympian gods received the fat and bones and other inedible bits, burnt on the altar. The meat was divided amongst the participants and sometimes portions were sent to friends who had not been at the sacrifice.
- 64 *Wife . . . him*: the metre changes to trochaics, which continue for the whole of this act.
- 67 *Loxias*: a title of Apollo.
- 68 *Tereus, Oedipus, Thyestes*: these were the most famous incestuous characters in mythology. Tereus raped his sister-in-law, Philomela, and cut out her tongue to prevent her telling anyone; Oedipus married his own mother, Jocasta, unawares; Thyestes seduced Areope, the wife of his brother Atreus.
- 68 *Amyntor's rage on*: Amyntor's son, Phoenix, was said to have seduced his father's mistress; Amyntor, in his rage, blinded him. Phoenix, like Moschion, was innocent.
- 68 *absit omen*: literally, 'I spit (into my bosom), as men say and bow to *Adrasteia*'; saying that he would rather have the notorious Diomnestos as son-in-law than Moschion might result in this misfortune, so he takes ritual precautions. Spitting to avert evil was a common practice; Adrasteia was a goddess who punished presumptuous words. Nothing is known of Diomnestos; there may be a reference to some contemporary scandal.
- 69 *barber's shop . . . stoa*: barber's shops, where Athenians went for their daily shave, were venues where news and gossip were exchanged. Athens was liberally supplied with stoas (colonnades) where people could sit in the shade and gossip.
- 69 *Thracian*: the Thracians were notoriously savage.
- 73 *Zeus . . . gold*: Acrisios, king of Argos, received a prophecy that his daughter Danae would bear a son who would kill him; he imprisoned her in a tower of bronze, but Zeus visited her in a shower of gold and she bore a son, Perseus, who, when he was grown up, accidentally killed his grandfather with a discus.
- 73 *Chairephon*: a notorious parasite who attended parties uninvited.
- 74 *Androcles*: nothing is known about him.
- 75 *Baktra or for Karia*: Baktria, north of Afghanistan, was the remotest

area where a Greek mercenary might find employment at this time. Mercenaries were often employed in Karia (south-west Turkey).

- 76 *You're completely . . . I believe*: the metre changes to trochaics, which continue for the rest of the play.
- 77 *Hephaistos' flame*: Hephaistos was the god of fire.
- 79 *lawful children*: Nikeratos hands his daughter to Moschion with the customary betrothal formula, 'for a crop of legitimate children'.
- 80 *lustral water*: before a marriage, bride and bridegroom had a ritual bath in water brought from a sacred spring; the 'bathboy' was a young relative of the bridegroom who brought the water; the piper provided music to accompany the wedding procession.
- 80 *Bacchus*: Dionysos, patron god of drama, in whose theatre the plays were performed. These lines are a form of the conventional ending of all the plays, which conclude with a prayer for victory in the dramatic contest.

The Arbitration (Epitrepontes)

- 81 *Syros*: the name only occurs once in the play (line 269) where it is in the diminutive form 'Syriskos'. A mosaic from a house in Mytilene, portraying the arbitration scene names him as 'Syros'. The Oxford text prefers to call him Syriskos, but perhaps there were particular reasons for Smikrines' use of the diminutive—e.g. to mark his inferiority.
- 82 *dancing girl*: literally 'harp-girl'.
- 83 *I've sprinkled salt . . .*: this is probably a proverbial expression, meaning 'I've added fuel to the fire'.
- 84 *two obols a pint*: in normal years a pint of wine cost one-third of an obol (there were six obols to a drachma and 6,000 drachmas to a talent).
- 84 *Four talents*: this was a very large dowry; the millionaire Kallipides in the *Dyskolos* gives a dowry of three talents for his daughter.
- 85 *Yes, yours*: Habrotonon appears to mean that if she is to succeed in her profession, lots of houses need to be turned upside down with husbands being unfaithful to their wives.
- 86 *To arbitrate*: arbitration by a neutral party was commonly used in a dispute and the decisions of the arbiter were binding.